

Dear Padre,

Why should I bother to be more religious? I'm a good person. Isn't that enough to get me into heaven?

When asked for advice about how people should decide on a vocation, St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, said they should do an imagination exercise. "Imagine that you are on your deathbed," he said. "From that point of view what would you wish you had done in your life?" That is still good advice.

Here's another exercise: Imagine you have a grandmother who is completely generous and caring toward you. Throughout your childhood, she was always there for you. But as a teen you belittled her and, in effect, told her that all she had offered is worthless to you. In a saner moment, won't you feel terrible about how you treated her?

Our life with God is much the same. God has given us absolutely everything, from our existence to every breath we take. God has also given us a way to know him through his Son, Jesus (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 73). And one way we know Jesus is through the Church and the celebration of the sacraments (CCC 1085). To refuse these gifts, to say, "I am already a good person. I don't need these gifts from God" is a bit presumptuous, don't you think?

To be "religious" is not just an outward show of piety. It's the way we have been given to learn God's language: the language of forgiveness, of faith, hope, and love. ●



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Bishop Bruce Lewandowski, CSSR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

MONDAY

March 20
St. Joseph
2 Sm 7:4-5a,
12-14a, 16
Rom 4:13,
16-18, 22 /
Mt 1:16, 18-21,
24a

TUESDAY

March 21
Lenten Weekday
Ez 47:1-9, 12
Jn 5:1-16

WEDNESDAY

March 22
Lenten Weekday
Is 49:8-15
Jn 5:17-30

THURSDAY

March 23
Lenten Weekday
Ex 32:7-14
Jn 5:31-47

FRIDAY

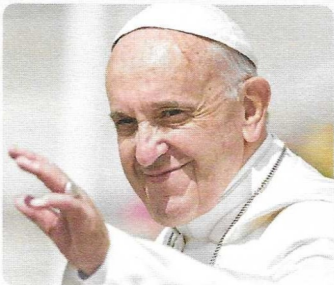
March 24
Lenten Weekday
Wis 2:1a, 12-22
Jn 7:1-2, 10,
25-30

SATURDAY

March 25
*Annunciation
of the Lord*
Is 7:10-14; 8:10
Heb 10:4-10
Lk 1:26-38

SUNDAY

March 26
*Fifth Sunday
of Lent*
Ez 37:12-14
Rom 8:8-11
Jn 11:1-45 or
Jn 11:3-7, 17,
20-27, 33b-45



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

We complain about things that are wrong in society, in the Church, in the world, without first questioning ourselves....Every fruitful, positive change must begin from ourselves. If we are blind, we cannot claim to be guides and teachers for others: indeed, a blind person cannot lead another blind person....

ANGELUS, FEBRUARY 27, 2022